

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003961

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/RPM (WARLICK/HOLTZ/PROSEN) AND USOSCE
(SCOTT/CONNUCK/SLOTTA)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/01/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EU](#) [PGOV](#) [IT](#) [OSCE](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY INSISTS IT IS FIRM ON PRESSURING RUSSIA ON
ISTANBUL COMMITMENTS

REF: A) STATE 217326 B) ROME 3880 C) CONNUCK-ESCOBAR
EMAIL 11/30 D) STATE 211137

Classified By: Classified by David D. Pearce, Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. On December 1, Poloff met with Dr. Susanna Schlien of the OSCE office of the Italian MFA to discuss the US position on a possible ministerial declaration during the OSCE Ljubljana summit. Poloff noted that the USG believed that no ministerial message might be better than one which let Russia off the hook. The USG position, which is supported by many NATO allies and EU member states, is that Russia must comply with its Istanbul commitments. Schlien stated that the Italian position was that Russia must be held accountable for its failure to produce results in Moldova, but feared that an inflexible approach could paralyze the organization during a period when the OSCE will need to conduct important operations in several former Soviet states. End summary.

2. (C) Poloff met with Schlien in advance of the departure to Ljubljana of the head of the Italian MFA's OSCE office, Brunelle Borzi, to discuss the Italian position on several OSCE proposals. Schlien noted that Italy was pleased that the OSCE seems to have resolved the budget issue (ref d) in advance of the summit. She hoped that it could pave the way for a more substantive discussion of the future of the organization. Schlien reiterated Borzi's concern that an inflexible USG position could lead to the failure to adopt a ministerial declaration during the summit (ref b). Failure to do so could cause the organization to lose credibility.

3. (C) Drawing on ref a and c points, Poloff noted that the USG preferred not to sidestep important issues facing the organization, particularly, Russian failure to implement its Istanbul commitments on Moldova. The USG position, which is supported by many EU members and NATO allies, is that adopting a declaration that avoids important issues would risk compromising the organization's function and purpose. Poloff noted that the USG and other allies were taking the same approach in discussions on the December 2005 NAC communique regarding Russia's Istanbul commitments on Moldova (ref a).

4. (C) Schlien insisted that Italy remained firm on Russia's need to respect Moldovan and Georgia sovereignty and abide by its 1999 commitments. From the Italian perspective, removing disputed language might allow Russia and other former Soviet states to endorse a ministerial declaration to move the organization forward on other issues. Of primary concern to Italy was enshrining in a ministerial declaration language that would insist that human rights and civil liberties violations in one OSCE country were a concern to all members. Having Russia and other CIS nations agree to this language could pave the way for OSCE operations in 2006, when possible referenda in the Balkans, elections in Belarus and continuing unrest in Kyrgyzstan are likely to require intense OSCE participation.

5. (C) Schlien noted that Italy believes that an appropriate compromise would be to insist on the language in regional declarations. This compromise is acceptable to Moldova and Georgia, according to Schlien, a clear indication that this move would not undermine the international community's support for those nations.

6. (C) Comment: This discussion indicates that the Italians are less concerned about avoiding a confrontation with the Russians than stalling the work of the OSCE over a failure to reach consensus on a few issues. Italy considers it has significant interests in the OSCE's work - the possible referenda in Kosovo and Montenegro and the election in Belarus - and does not want to see a breakdown in the organization.
SPOGLI